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[skin deep]

Age of Enlightenment

Find out which natural ingredients are rock stars when it comes to brightening treatments and products.

AS PEOPLE AGE, THEIR SKIN TENDS TO MOVE toward the dark side, meaning it begins to show signs of hyperpigmentation, sun damage, and an all-around lackluster appearance due to stress, pollution, an unhealthy lifestyle, and more. According to Janel Luu, CEO of Le Mieux and PurErb, the epidermis, also known as the top layer of skin, has melanocyte cells, which produce a pigment referred to as melanin. It determines skintone and helps protect skin against harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. However, due to the abnormal production of melanin by the melanocytes, skin discoloration occurs. “Age spots, discoloration, and mottled skintone stem from UV damage to the skin,” says Tina Zillmann, founder of Advanced Rejuvenating Concepts. “Melasma is hormonally triggered, and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation is caused by deep inflammation of the skin at an acne lesion or cut. Melanocytes are stimulated to produce pigment to help protect the skin.” According to her, a long-term and complete at-home skincare regimen combined with professional esthetic treatments can help treat melasma by improving skin’s texture

and health, reducing fine lines, and leaving it with a more even and luminous appearance.

While brightening services and a homecare regimen are two important aspects of tackling hyperpigmentation and dark spots on the skin, Sallie Deitz, education director at Bio-Therapeutic, believes in a three-pronged approach. The third necessary element is protecting the skin by using SPF along with a hat and sunglasses while exposed to UV light, and minimizing exposure by avoiding sun and reflective surfaces (sand, water, and pavement) between the hours of 10 AM and 3 PM, as UV rays are at their most intense levels at that time.

Act Natural

According to Fabienne Lindholm, executive director of education, North America, at Babor, most women of a mature age will experience two types of hyperpigmentation. One is due to melanin formation and uneven diffusion and the other is due to cell metabolism slowing down and no longer eliminating cellular toxins. Melanin formation and uneven diffusion can usually be controlled by reducing the production of tyrosinase activity, which can be achieved with a variety of ingredients. The second type of hyperpigmentation is less commonly known and is called lipofuscin. It is caused by cellular waste locked in the cytoplasm of the skin cell. “We often call this an age spot, and we begin to see them on women and men around 45 years old,” says Lindholm.

In recent years, brightening ingredients like arbutin, hydroquinone, and topical retinoids have received negative press because of the possible side effects associated with them (redness, burning, and stinging, among others), so many of today’s brightening products now feature natural ingredients that offer similar results without the safety concerns. Babor, for example, features a melanoxyol complex that uses a combination of Swiss cress sprout and soy protein to help slow down the tyrosinase activity and also increase the removal

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“As people age, their skin tends to move toward the dark side, meaning it begins to show signs of hyperpigmentation...”

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Lemon peel has long been used to brighten the complexion.

“Natural lightening extracts have been shown to speed up cell turnover and break down melanin without causing skin irritation...”

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of cellular waste, which will focus on dissipating lipofuscin. “These all-natural ingredients will not create any inflammation and irritation and can even be used by expectant mothers or people with high sensitivity,” says Lindholm.

According to Elisabeth Nehme, international brand ambassador and master educator at [comfort zone], the Italian skincare brand also uses natural ingredients in its brightening formulas, such as pearl powder, because it helps restore brightness to the skin and offers immediate and progressive results. Deitz recommends natural ingredients like licorice extract, which treats dark circles and dark pigmented areas, and works by inhibiting tyrosinase and reducing the amount of melanin produced; lemon-based ingredients, which have been used as a home remedy to lighten and brighten skin discolorations for hundreds of years and also has an antibacterial effect on the skin; and kojic acid, which is a natural alternative to hydroquinone and an effective brightening agent that helps inhibit melanin production.

The laboratory at Phytomer uses a combination of natural ingredients such as *dictyopteris*, which is a brown seaweed that is effective at inhibiting tyrosinase and other pigment-regulating molecules produced by the skin to even out pigment production. It also blocks the transport of pigment from melanocytes into keratinocytes in cells that have been activated to overproduce pigment. Also, according to Jacquelyn Hill, director of education

at Image Skincare, Belides (*bellis perennis* daisy flower) is proving to be a new powerhouse ingredient in the skin-brightening arena. “Studies show this plant-derived lightener is twice as effective as arbutin when it comes to inhibiting melanin,” she says. According to Luu, other effective skin-brightening botanical ingredients include angelica root; bearberry; bilberry; ginseng; lady’s mantle; lemon peel; licorice root; mitracarpe, a plant extract from a West African plant; mulberry; and soybean. “Natural lightening extracts have been shown to speed up cell turnover and break down melanin without causing skin irritation, which is sometimes an issue with other lightening ingredients,” says Luu. “Also, there seems to be a slight shift away from cosmeceuticals toward more natural products. The challenge is to incorporate botanical ingredients into the formula in ways that allow the natural ingredients to remain stable enough to be effective.”

According to Zillmann, many of these botanical ingredients can be paired with alpha and beta hydroxy acids and retinol to help accelerate results, but this may increase the chances of the client developing sensitivities. “Clients, as well as skin therapists and doctors, want safer alternatives to hydroquinone,” says Annet King, director of global education for Dermalogica and The International Dermal Institute (IDI). “Hydroquinone can only be used for short periods and has considerable side effects. Peptides and botanical brighteners can also affect melanin production in multiple parts of the development versus just bleaching or stopping tyrosinase. They can affect the melanin pathway throughout the process.”

Asian Influence

According to Angela Eriksen-Stanley, director of education at Phytomer Group Brands, obtaining skin that is totally even and devoid of pigment spots is the most sought-after skin characteristic in Asia. “It is the equivalent to the American anti-aging skincare trend,” she says. “Product lines that are sold globally must have effective hyperpigmentation products if they wish to do well in the Asian market. That is why, when Phytomer creates products for hyperpigmentation, we look to the Asian market’s benchmark lightening ingredients.” Once Phytomer’s

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product formulas are complete, the company has independent laboratories in Asia perform clinical tests on them to ensure that the products will be effective in that particular market. “If we create a product that tests well in the Asian market, we can feel confident that it will do well globally,” says Eriksen-Stanley.

Similarly, the Asian market has influenced [comfort zone] in formulating effective products that are still safe and gentle. “Skin sensitivity is high in these markets, as are expectations,” says Nehme. “Education is key in understanding why the careful slow-and-steady approach is best.”

A Bright Future

Because brightening products and treatments are incorporating more natural ingredients with incredible results, Nehme is seeing a growth in body-brightening treatments, as well. “There’s more awareness that our skin doesn’t end at the neck,” she says. “A series of head-to-toe brightening treatments is perfect for the bride-to-be, holiday seasons, and to counter the effects of urban life.”

In addition, Eriksen-Stanley has noticed a trend in using brightening essences, which is a pre-serum product that contains a water- or toner-like texture and includes brightening ingredients. The product can be applied to the skin after cleansing but before applying a serum or moisturizer. “This is

a way to customize an at-home program to be able to address hyperpigmentation at the same time as treating other skin concerns, like anti-aging without adding weighty textures to the skin,” she says. “When these concentrated skin tonics are formulated for hyperpigmentation, they allow for a focused attack on hyperpigmentation when used with a brightening serum and moisturizer.”

According to Deitz, today’s skin-brightening products have moved into the basic homecare regimen. “With education, skin health and fitness have become a matter of maintenance today, and clients feel that they can have an effect on their skin with the newer brightening ingredients and compounds on the market,” she says. Such skin-brightening at-home products include exfoliants, serums, and masks as well as cosmetics that leave the skin looking luminous, such as primers, tinted moisturizers, foundations, and highlighters. “Our skin, although a resistant shield that defends us from outside aggressors, is still a delicate and ever-changing covering, subject to all of our external and internal stress and lifestyle choices,” says Nehme. “Many strong and fast-acting ingredients are also aggressive, and potentially damaging, capable of leaving our skin with lasting dark spots, premature thinning, and even a sensitized nervous system. Natural ingredients may take a little longer to make the desired change, but they work in harmony with our skin, safely, gently, and respectfully.”—*Nicole Altavilla*

BRIGHTENING AGENTS

Even though natural ingredients are illuminating the brightening category, there are many others that are highly effective in helping complexions shine. Annet King, director of global education for Dermalogica and The International Dermal Institute (IDI), shares a few common ingredients found in brightening products:

Niacinamide prevents transfer of melanosomes to neighboring cells and inhibits inflammatory mediators, which help reduce pigmentation associated with post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

Oligopeptide-34 is a proprietary peptide that reduces tyrosinase activity and melanosome transfer to cells.

Oligopeptide-51 is a new proprietary peptide that inhibits melanin formation and tyrosinase activity.

Vitamin C and its stable derivatives like magnesium ascorbyl phosphate and ascorbyl glucoside control oxidation and inhibit it along the biosynthetic pathway of melanin. It also inhibits tyrosinase synthesis and activity.

Zinc Glycinate inhibits tyrosinase and melanin formation. The amino acid glycine carries the zinc into the skin where it stimulates the formation of an antioxidant protein called metallothionein and binds with copper to inhibit melanin production.—*N.A.*



Products and treatments that treat hyperpigmentation are especially popular in Asia.

[skin deep]

SHINE BRIGHT

Brighten skin and even out pigmentation with products made with light-enhancing ingredients.—*Darby Radcliff*



1. Advanced Rejuvenating Concepts Lighten More:

Fading discolorations, this serum exfoliates and brightens with amino acids, azelaic acid, and evening primrose extract. www.arcskincare.com

2. Biopelle Brightening Cream: This moisturizing cream combines two powerful skin brighteners, arbutin, an extract from the bearberry plant, and phytic acid, an organic acid to help reveal radiant skin. www.biopelle.com

3. Dermalogica C-12 Pure Bright Serum: Formulated with an exclusive blend of Oligopeptides and brown and red algae, this lightweight topical treatment regulates melanin formation and combats pigmentation. www.dermalogica.com

4. G.M. Collin PhytoWhite Dark Spot Serum: Reduce the appearance of dark spots and even out skintone with this brightening serum that exfoliates and protects skin from the visible signs of aging. www.gmcollin.com

5. Image Skincare Iluma Intense Brightening Crème: Effectively fade age spots with this lightening crème complex, which evens out skin discoloration and brightens skin for a healthy, youthful complexion. www.imageskincare.com

6. IS Clinical White Lightening Serum: Formulated with a powerful botanical blend of bearberry, mushroom, and Norwegian kelp extracts, this advanced formula helps to diminish the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. www.isclinical.com

7. Le Mieux Brightening Serum: Improve uneven tone with this creamy serum that contains eight advanced brightening agents and four potent peptides. www.lemieuxcosmetics.com

8. Nelly De Vuyst VitaLift-C HA Serum: Reduce the visible signs of aging with this serum made with radiance-enhancing ingredients, including vitamin C and hyaluronic acid. www.nellydevuyst.com

9. Pure Fiji Exfoliating Scrub: Exfoliate and brighten skin naturally with this fruit enzyme mask infused with papaya and pineapple enzymes that gently even out skintone. www.purefiji.com

10. Sesha Cell-White Lightening Emulsion: Prevent hyperpigmentation with the patented AMHP peptide and skin-lightening compounds, including alpha-arbutin. www.seshaskin.com

11. Skin Script Glycolic and Retinol Pads: Active ingredients such as arbutin, kojic acid, glycolic acid, and retinol are infused in convenient pads, which gently and progressively brighten, clarify, and renew the skin. www.skscriptrx.com

12. YG Laboratories Clarifier Radiance Restoring Normalizer: Fade age spots with this lightweight emulsion, which rapidly intensifies radiance, revealing a luminous complexion. www.yglabs.com